

Representative James A. Leach  
Security Council Expansion  
Before the House of Representatives  
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Mr. Speaker, one of the most talked-about issues in foreign policy today relates to the nature and possibility of United Nations reform, including the question of whether to expand the number of permanent members of the UN Security Council.

Not unexpectedly, the People's Republic of China has expressed great angst about several of the proposed methodologies for expanding the number of permanent members – possibly because of historical friction between China and Japan and, to a lesser extent, India.

My sense is that the issue of the make-up of the Security Council should be the subject of serious review. As a former member of the United States Delegation to the UN as well as a former co-Chairman of the US Commission on Improving the Effectiveness of the UN, I am convinced that constructive reform of the Security Council is in order.

It is in the world's interest and the U.S. national interest to expand the Security Council. The claim of India, Japan and Germany for a permanent seat is compelling. Likewise, there is a credible case that the Security Council could be modestly expanded on a shared co-country basis as well. For example, Brazil and Mexico might be awarded a seat in which they would alternate terms. In a similar way, Egypt, Nigeria, and South Africa might be given the right to alternate terms with each other, as might the Muslim-majority countries of Indonesia, Pakistan and Bangladesh. Such an approach would expand the Security Council by six seats involving the granting of new rights to eleven countries.

The case for granting veto power to new full-time members may be credible, but for various reasons one or another of the current five permanent members can be expected to object to the dilution of their own veto authority. Hence, realistically membership but not veto expansion is likely to be the agenda issue subject to serious review at this time.

Expansion of the number of permanent seats under this approach would involve a substantial change in the Security Council, but this change would be more likely to be stabilizing than destabilizing because it would better reflect power balances in the world today and lead to more equitable financial burden-sharing of UN actions. It would cause the Council to reflect greater religious and racial diversity and also be composed of a higher percentage of the world's population. Such a new Security Council arrangement would underscore the role of Asia in world affairs as well as reflect a more credible African and Latin American presence.

In any regard, I would hope that the Executive Branch as well as other member countries of the UN might give this and other comparable approaches serious consideration.

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